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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/697,026

10/31/2003

Kazuki Emori

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EXAMINER

KIM, ANDREW

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3714

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

05/29/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/697,026	Applicant(s) EMORI ET AL.	
	Examiner ANDREW KIM	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 January 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,4 and 6-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,4 and 6-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>1/2/08</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code 102 not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ozaki et al. (US 2001/0031658).

Claim 3: Ozaki discloses

- a plurality of symbol strips each having a plurality of symbols (paragraph 27);
- a plurality of annular bodies to which each of the symbol strips are annularly attached (paragraph 27);
- an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game (fig. 1, item 2); and
- a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction of a front of the symbols,
- wherein the plurality of annular bodies are formed to reflect light from the light source in a direction of the LCD panel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code 103 not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue (US 2004/0038726) in view of Ozaki et al. (US 2001/0031658).

Inoue discloses a gaming machine with lights behind the symbols to illuminate the symbols to provide better visibility to the player.

Ozaki discloses providing a gaming machine with a front display provided between the player and the reels.

Claims 1, 4: Inoue discloses

- a plurality of symbol strips each having a plurality of symbols (paragraph 27);
- a plurality of annular bodies to which each of the symbol strips are annularly attached (paragraph 27);
- image display means provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to display an image concerning a game (fig. 1, item 2) ; and
- a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from behind the symbols (paragraph 29),
- wherein the plurality of annular bodies are made transparent or semitransparent for transmitting light from the light source in a direction of the image display means (paragraph 29).

One of ordinary skill in the art would have found the combination of Inoue and Ozaki obvious to provide more player appeal. Ozaki discloses LCD and EL panels to produce graphics which are pleasing to the eye. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to modify Inoue with Ozaki to provide more appealing graphics to the player.

The term “one piece” may be interpreted as two elements connected together to form one piece.

Claims 3, 6: Inoue discloses

- a plurality of symbol strips each having a plurality of symbols (paragraph 27);
- a plurality of annular bodies to which each of the symbol strips are annularly attached (paragraph 27);
- image display means provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to display an image concerning a game (fig. 1, item 2); and

Inoue does not explicitly disclose

- a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction of a front of the symbols,
- wherein the plurality of annular bodies are formed to reflect light from the light source in a direction of the image display means.

Instead, Inoue teaches a gaming machine that includes a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from behind the reels to allow the symbols to be noticeably visible to the player (paragraph 27-29). In an analogous reference, Ozaki teaches a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction [in] front of the symbols (fig. 2, item 29). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to illuminate the symbols in this way to light the symbols such that the user may see the symbols better and know quickly if a winning combination has occurred. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the instant invention to modify Inoue with a light source from a slanting direction to increase player appeal.

Claims 7, 8: Inoue discloses a gaming machine wherein the annular body is formed in white color plastic (paragraph 58).

Claim 9: Inoue discloses wherein the at least one light source is a plurality of light sources (fig. 3).

Claims 12-15: Inoue does not explicitly teach wherein front display means is a liquid crystal display, however it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a liquid crystal display because it provides various overlapping patterns with good visibility and a high game selection capability to a player (abstract) as taught by analogous reference Ozaki. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the instant invention to modify Inoue with overlapping LCD

screen to provide various overlapping patterns with good visibility and a high game selection capability to a player.

Claims 16 and 17: Inoue fails to explicitly disclose a light source as described in the instant specification. Instead, Inoue discloses a light source within the reel housing as well as a monitor that may be used as a light source. In an analogous reference, Ozaki teaches a light source between an LCD panel and the reels (Ozaki, fig. 2) to provide back lighting for the LCD and to illuminate the reels. One of ordinary skill in the art would have seen the benefit of modifying Inoue as modified by Ozaki with two light sources between an LCD and the reels to further provide better backlighting for the LCD and to further illuminate the reels. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the instant invention to modify Inoue with two light sources between the LCD panel and reels to provide better backlighting and illumination of the reels.

Claims 10, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue (US 2004/0038726) in view of Ozaki et al. (US 2001/0031658).

Claims 10 and 11: Inoue does not explicitly teach wherein the structure of the annular bodies are described. Instead, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to have the annular bodies of Inoue built as described in claims 10 and 11 since the Applicant has not disclosed that such an arrangement would offer any advantage

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and appears that the gaming machine of Inoue would perform equally well with an annular body as recited in claims 10 and 11. Therefore, it would have been obvious design choice to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Inoue with each annular body with two rims and an indicia strip between the two rims.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the pending claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ANDREW KIM whose telephone number is (571)272-1691. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on 571-272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

AK 5/30/2008
/XUAN M. THAI/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 37


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TC 3700